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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0533

HENRY A. WAXMAN
33RD DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

November 18, 2013

The Honorable Deborah A. P. Hersman
Acting Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20594

Dear Chairman Hersman:

I received your response to my October 2, 2013, letter about the fatal crash at the Santa Monica Airport (SMO) on September 29, 2013. My letter expressed my concern that the government shutdown could undermine the investigation by preventing the timely collection of evidence. Your response confirms my concern. You write, "I believe safety was compromised by stopping this investigation and many others, not to mention the accidents that occurred that we did not launch to, during the shutdown."

I recognize that the shutdown was not your fault. It was the result of the decision of House Republicans to hold the government hostage to their extreme political demands. Your letter underscores how senseless and irresponsible the shutdown was.

Nevertheless, I am concerned about any impact on your ability to conduct a thorough investigation of this fatal crash. I urge you to redouble your efforts on this investigation to make up for any impediments caused by the shutdown.

The community surrounding Santa Monica Airport has had long-standing concerns about the safety of the airport. They have warned that SMO is an accident waiting to happen, and I have been fighting for safety improvements for many years. The airport is located just feet from many homes, and as I noted in my previous letter, the Santa Monica Airport Commission Chairman believes that if the plane had not struck the hangar, it might have gone over an embankment and crashed into nearby residences.

It is critically important that NTSB conduct its investigation into the accident as thoroughly and expeditiously as is possible. I thank you for NTSB's commitment to this matter under the challenges created by the senseless government shutdown and stand ready to assist in any and all ways.

Sincerely,


Henry A. Waxman